

VICTORIA LODGE OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
650 Fisgard Street, Victoria, . B.C. V8W 1R6
1993 - 6

THE HUNG SOCIETY

The Society of Heaven and Earth

(Esoteric and allegoric implications for Masonry)

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Like Freemasonry in the West, the Hung or Triad Society of China, seems justly entitled to claim that it is a lineal descendant of the 'Ancient Mysteries'. Its signs are of primeval antiquity, but it represents the Higher Degrees in Freemasonry rather than the Craft in that the main part of the ritual deals with what is supposed to befall man after death. It has many striking analogies with ancient Egypt; for example, the Hung Boat is similar to the Solar Barque of Ra, and just as in the Egyptian Book of the Dead we find that the soul of the deceased is symbolically weighed, so too we find a similar procedure in the Hung Ceremonies. A similar but far more tenuous link can be found to the American Societies, particularly, the Nagual Cult in Mexico and in Central America. For all that we are not entitled to assume that the Chinese Society is an off-shoot of Egyptian Mysteries, Greek Societies or Mexican Cults. It seems much more probable that they all have sprung from a common ancestor and developed along similar lines.

It should be explained that such a thing as a complete ritual of all 'the Hung degrees' does not exist. The various Officers in the Lodges make copies of their own parts; the two most important being those of the Master and the Vanguard. In order, therefore, to reconstruct the whole ritual it is necessary to possess copies of all the various parts, and very desirable to have a series of rituals dealing with the same parts. In most countries, today, because , owing to the fact that possession of the ritual is a penal offense, the rituals themselves are not often complete, being rather in the form of notes containing the portions that the Officer is likely to forget. The notes are often in cryptic or semi-cryptic form. This is done in order to reduce the size of the book and enable it to be carried on the person securely hidden. Today we are fortunate in that we have a number of complete or almost complete rituals obtained in the main from confiscated material obtained from police raids in Malaya after the outlawing of the Hung Society or the various Hung affiliates, such as the 'White Lily', the 'Hung', the 'Incense Burners', the 'Origin of Chaos', the 'Origin of the Dragon', what all these societies were it is difficult to say but like the Hung Society, they had initiation rites. The 'White Lily,' 'White or Lotus Society,' if it were not the Hung Society under a different name, was certainly closely connected with it, and it seems probable that the present rituals consist of an amalgamation of the rituals of the White Lily and of the Hung. Compare the Masonic rituals as shown by the Ancient Work, the Canadian work, and the Emulation Work etc. All are Masonic and yet different

The White Lily is probably represented by what we now have as a traditional history and certain preliminary ceremonies, while the journey through the Underworld to Heaven represents the old Hung Ritual.

The whole question of the persecution of the Buddhists and Taoists will be dealt with later, but it important to realize that Emperor Kang 1151 (or Kang-hi) actually inaugurated his reign with a savage persecution of both the Buddhists and Taoists, and specifically attacked the Hung and the White Lily Societies. The latter facts show that the Hung Society did not originate at the iraditional

date of 1662, but was in existence previously, and the political tone which it has now adopted was probably the result of this persecution which in part is represented in certain incidents in the Traditional History. It is clear that previous to that date it had been a Taoist mystical Society, although probably even in those days there were strong Buddhist influences in the ritual.

A great deal has been written from various points of view about the significance and history of the ritual of British and European Freemasonry, and very diverse views have been promulgated. As is well known, the present form of our Masonic ritual is relatively recent, but there are good grounds for believing that it is based upon rituals that go back to a remote period. The difficulty that always faces the student is the fact that Freemasonry and its equivalents

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are secret societies, and therefore it is not to be expected that the uninstructed and the lay world who are not Masons would be enlightened concerning the mysteries of the craft, or concerning those analogous societies. The student is constantly thwarted by the reticence which is inculcated during initiation and is enforced by the threat of dire penalties if at any time the initiate should improperly disclose the secrets entrusted to him. Even when natives become Christians they still regard the old secrets as sacred and a conscientious man is not likely to do or say that which he has promised not to reveal. Even those investigators who had the best fortune in this respect can never be sure of all that takes place; indeed they are generally aware that such is not the case, and furthermore, any esoteric meaning there may be will almost certainly not be communicated. Thus, whether the mysteries of existing backward peoples, or those of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, Greece, Rome, China and Mexico and Central America, or the modern possible survivals of them, are investigated, we are always brought up by a dense screen of reticence through which one sees as through translucent glass, darkly, if at all.

The Hung ceremony exhibits an interesting conflict between pious adherence to the ancient landmarks and adaptation to political ends, and the later history of the Society of Heaven and Earth shows how easily politics may endanger or even destroy a cult that was essentially of other worldly significance. A somewhat analogous change from a religious or quasi-religious organization into a revolutionary, political organization occurs in the powerful and mysterious cult of Nagualism. Here, for a period of two hundred years many and diverse tribes of Mexico and Central America were united into organized opposition against the government and the religion which had been introduced from Europe. (see 'Nagualism' by Dr. D.G.Brinton. Philadelphia, 1894.). There is a parallel example in the Masons with Jacobites after 1688 in England and France; or the actions of the Masons during the American War of Independence.

Symbolism

Symbolism is the natural concomitant of a cult, and, indeed, it is practically the only means by which a people unacquainted with writing can express their abstract ideas. It is necessary to distinguish between different kinds of pictorial signs, but this becomes more difficult when the characters have become conventionalized. They may be classified under -1. Pictorial signs; 2. Emblems; 3. Symbols; and are thus defined:

1. Pictorial signs, the representation of any object when it is intended to express that object in general. e.g. a thumbnail sketch of a fish represents fish in general.

2. Emblems include tribal signs, personal insignia etc. these do not necessarily require an analogy between the objects representing and the objects

or qualities represented, but may arise from pure accident Family crests fall into this category.

3. Symbols Are less obvious and more artificial than mere signs; they require convention, are not only abstract, but metaphysical, and often need explanation from history, religion, and customs. They do not depict, but suggest, subjects; they do not speak directly through the eye to the intelligence, but presuppose in the mind knowledge of an event or fact which the sign recalls. The symbols of the ark, dove, olive branch, sprig of acacia and the rainbow would be wholly meaningless to people unfamiliar with the Mosaic or some similar cosmology.' (see 'Sign language among North American Indians' by Garrick Mallery. First Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1879-go, Washington 1881, p.389.)

Looking at the symbols on the Master Mason's apron and the same symbols as used by these various Societies around the world; it is found that the rosette with the centre spot on it represents the living GOD (or BUDDHA, or RA or the INCA or the AZTEC SUN GODS). The rosette without a central spot represents the sleeping God, or death of the living, or the departure for the underworld. The central Rosette in the centre of the flap represents the Sun as the male principle of the Creator, confirmed by the two circles with dots in their centers. The tassels contain writings in the ancient temple numerical esoteric writing. "The Creator created one which became two. The two produced three. From these three all mankind descended". This is not, in this case corroborated by repetition. Normally it would be. The central Rosette also represents THE ALL SEEING EYE of the Creator, usually at the apex of a pyramid, and is used extensively by all the above. There are a number of symbols associated with the

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Hung (& Triad) Society that are well known elsewhere. Just a few will be mentioned. Earth, the provider of food and drink, the common Father of All. The numbers three, five and seven were sacred; especially three and seven, which were also associated with the calendar. In general, Three denotes the three great founders, Five refers to The Five Ancestors, or The Five Tiger Generals; whereas, Seven, is 'the five' with the opposites of Yin and Yang united. The most important symbol was Fire. Fire was worshipped as the life-giver, and at the same time as the destroyer, the active generator of animate existence. This idea was by no means peculiar to the Hung. It repeatedly recurs in Sanskrit, in Greek, Egyptian and in Teutonic mythology. The fire-god Agri (Ignis) is in the Vedas, ancient sacred literature of the Hinduism, the maker of men, there is also the Hindu Gods of Shiva, the Destroyer and Vishnu, the Preserver. Prometheus, the Greek Titan who stole fire from Olympus (Heaven) that he may with it animate the human forms he has molded from clay. (some say and gave it to mankind'.)

The Sign of Fire in the Hung ritual, elsewhere known as the Sign of Distress, is of particular interest A great many years ago James Chalmers, the well known missionary and a Scottish Mason, was convinced that something analogous to Freemasonry occurred in New Guinea. He said that on one occasion, in the Papuan Gulf area, he was in grave danger of death owing to native hostility and as a last resort made the (Scottish) Sign of Distress which he firmly believed saved his life.

Another important symbol still venerated is the Tree. In ancient mythology 'we often hear of the 'tree of life'; this also includes the Garden of Eden's Tree of life. From the Tree flows the sign of the cross both the cross of St. Andrew of equal arms and the Latin cross with its arms of unequal length. It also figures prominently in the ritual of the Tall Cedars of Lebanon, and also the Masonic acacia tree - sprig of acacia'. More will be said about this later.

Before proceeding into the history of China, there is a phrase that occurs very often in the initiation ceremony that needs a little explanation. It is "Overthrow Ts'ing and restore Mine. "Ts'ing not only refers to the Chinese Dynasty, but it also means dirty, unclean, immoral, all the bad human traits. Similarly, Ming is not only the name of the Chinese Dynasty, which was overthrown by the Manchus, that is the Ts'ing, but also means LIGHT. Hence 'To restore Ming' means :- a) Morally. To turn towards a pure life. b) Politically. To restore the old Chinese Dynasty. c) Allegorically. To journey towards Heaven, the place of Light d) Mystically. To restore the rule of the Divine Spark within us.

A Brief History of Early China

In order to understand the objects seen in the Lodge and also some of the incidents in the ceremony itself, it is desirable that we should know something of the early history of China.

At the time of the downfall of the Han dynasty, about A. D. 221 the Western Provinces revolted and the Emperor found it impossible to subdue. In this emergency he issued a general call for Volunteers, which was responded to by three men Lui Pei, himself a Cadet of the Han Dynasty, and his two friends, Kwang Yi and Chang Fei. The three met in a peach garden and having burnt magic incense sacrificed a black ox and a white horse, offered up prayers and bound themselves by a special oath of fidelity. It is from this incident, in all probability, that the Triad Society derives its custom of sacrificing a black ox and a white horse at an initiation. This is a very ancient ritual; the black ox symbolizes the Earth Goddess of the Underworld and usually preceded any attempt to visit that place. The Horse is the emblem of the Sun. They also represent the contending forces in Nature; day and night; good and evil; male and female; Yin and Yang. They are represented in the West by the black and white pillars of the Rosicrucians and by the black and white banner of the Knights Templar, and the mosaic pavement in the Craft Lodges. Lui Pei was named 'First Brother' or Leader, and Loyally Supported by the other two. They formed an army and defeated the rebels. The Han Dynasty, being very weak, soon collapsed, and China was split into three Kingdoms. Lui Pei, who was of royal descent, assumed the title of Emperor of Shu. He was loyally supported by his two sworn brethren, but Kwan Yi was captured during the fighting and put to death by Lui Pei's enemies. Posthumous honours were conferred upon him in memory of his unswerving loyalty to his friend, and he was deified under the name of Kwan Ti and worshipped as the God of War. This honour was conferred on him by the Ming Emperor Wan Li, and he became to the military what Confucius is to the literary world.

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When the Hung Society came into existence is uncertain, but there is little doubt that what took place towards the end of the seventeenth century should be regarded as a reorganization rather than as the creation of an entirely new body.

From the middle of the ninth century down to 1662 (The last of the Ming Emperors died in 1644.) the Chinese Emperors adopted a policy of toleration towards the three great religious systems which flourished in China; Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, but in 1662, the year Kang Hsi was made Emperor, the second Sovereign of the new Manchu Dynasty, the Ts'ings, issued the so called 'Sacred Edict', wherein he ordered drastic measures to be taken against the Buddhists and Taoists, on various spurious charges. The following Societies were also included because of misunderstanding and ignorance; The 'White Lily', 'Hung', 'White Lotus', 'Incense Burners', 'Origin of Chaos' and the 'Origin of the

Dragon'. What exactly all these Societies were it is difficult to say, but like the Hung Society they had initiation rites. The White Lily Society if it was not the Hung Society under a different name was certainly very closely connected with it. It is important to realize that Kang fisi (or Khang-hi) actually inaugurated his reign with a savage persecution of both the Buddhists and Taoists and specifically attacked the Hung and the White Lily Societies. This fact shows that the Hung Society did not originate at the traditional date of 1662 as stated in the initiation by the Master. Further, the political tones which the Society (principally the Triad Society) has now adopted was probably the result of the persecution and is represented in part in certain incidents in the Traditional History. It is fairly clear that previous to that date it had been a Taoist mystical religious Society and probably even then had strong Buddhist influences in the Ritual.

Although we do not have any definite historical evidence of the Hung Society before 1662, we do however, have a great deal on the White Lily, or White Lotus Society. Its founder was the famous Buddhist teacher, Eon, (c A D. 376), whose name in Chinese is Hwui-yin. He and his meditating disciples adopted the name of Amitabha (or Amida), which was called the White Lotus Society. His writings were the chief inspiration of Zendo, the great Buddhist teacher, who was born A. D. 614 in China. It is also interesting to note that the teachings of this Buddhist school of thought was brought to Japan about 800 A. D. by monks disguised as horse dealers, and became the most popular religious sect in Japan.

During the early years of the Society it is important to note that there were several very fierce, though brief, persecutions occurring (A. D. 560 and 618).

During the period of the Yuen Dynasty (A. D. 1280-1368.), who were Mongolian invaders, there arose a leader named Han Shan-tung who in 1344 revitalized the White Lotus Society with which his own Grandfather had previously been closely associated. He was joined by four other prominent men, and thus these are the five monks who appear, in the Hung ritual. The Society rose in rebellion and wore red turbans, which it will be found are worn by the Hung heroes. This rebellion undermined the authority of the Mongolian, Yuen Dynasty, but it was not Hung Shan-tung but a Buddhist monk who finally seized the throne under the name of Hung Wu, and became the first Emperor of the new Chinese Minal of Chinese Nationality and Patriotism.

The growth of the Hung or White Lily or Triad Society has been phenomenal. We have no means of estimating

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its total membership in China, much less throughout the rest of the world, for wherever there are Chinese this Society is to be found. There are numerous Society Temples in B.C., and they all take on various names, some of which appear as benevolent Societies.

In 1774 the Grand Master, Wang Lung, raised a revolt in the north eastern provinces of Shan Tung, which after much desperate fighting was repressed, and Wang Lung and many of his supporters were executed. In all over a hundred thousand people were executed, but the Society was far from destroyed, for in 1777 it rose again and was again destroyed. In 1807 the activities of the Society in the south again attracted the attention of the Manchu Emperor, and again it was suppressed after much difficulty.

The Triad Society continued to grow and broke out into open revolt in the Taiping revolt. A Chinese village schoolmaster, called Hung, in 1851 raised the standard of revolt against the Manchu Dynasty. He was joined by tens of

thousands of supporters, and was also strongly supported by the Hung Society and in consequence the insurrection is often called 'The Triad Wars'. It has often been said that the Chinese Christians were involved. However, they prevailed until Chinese Gordon of Khartoum fame defeated them and obtained for Britain many concessions from the Emperor. Since this revolt the Society seems to have kept somewhat in the background.

However, there are reasons for believing that the Society played a major role in the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty, for example we know that Dr. Sun Yat-sen was a member of the Hung Society. He did resign from the Society to facilitate the general settlement of the country: But.. It is known that Dr. Sun Yat-sen was also a member of the Triad Society, it is certainly significant that although he was a Christian, he paid reverence to the Hung and Triad Societies. The Society has been very active in Hong Kong and in its ancient stronghold of Canton. It is now fairly clear that the overseas Lodges have dropped their political activities for the time being.

In the days when the Triad Society was an authorized and recognized body in Malaya it was known as the Ghee Hin Society, and had its own Temple in Singapore. It lost this status when it was found that the Society had absolute control over its members and regularly held judgment over the general population as well as its own members for various crimes and when condemned the victims were bound and gagged and weighted with a heavy stone and dropped through a hole in the floor of the lodge into a drain, river or the sea. This was the fate of many who could not give the correct responses before entering a Lodge.

The traditional history of the Society as given by the Master of the Lodge at the initiation of the candidates will not be given. It is some sixteen pages long and idolizes some of the sympathetic White Lotus or White Lotus Society's principal characters already mentioned above. It weaves a fairy tale of magic around their deeds and presents the positive side to the candidate.

Physical Description of a Lodge

In general the lodge was a rectangular (although some were square). The major axis lay east and west and dividing the Lodge was a wall with a three arched gate in the middle. This wall ran north and south. The Lodge had four gates; east, south, west and north, east in China is the reference direction. On the lintels and uprights of each gate was inscribed with verses, on the top of each gate was a Pavilion surmounted by calabash gourds, which was one of the emblems carried by one of the Eight Immortals. The walls of the lodge were decorated with squares and triangles and over the various gates were hung different types of weapons. The stones at the bottom of the wall and the boards of the gates were made to look like dragons scales. The central gate in the middle of the Lodge was actually made up of three removable gates, one in front of the other. In front of each of these three gates two men were stationed as guards. Each guard wore a red headband or turban. Each pair performed the same function as the wardens guarding the chambers of King Solomon's Temple.

Beyond the central triple gate stood the hall of Fidelity and Loyalty within which was the genealogical table of the Founders and Foundresses of the League. In front of the East Gate was a shrine called Kao-khi, immediately in front of this shrine was an altar. On one side sat the Master or Incense Lord and his insignia consisted of a sword, a seal and a warrant flag providing him with the authority to act in any manner he saw fit.

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The Red Pavilion. This Pavilion was usually found upstairs and was sufficiently

large to admit the candidates. Now days, for ease of concealment it is a model with a removable roof. It has four doors and commemorates the hero Wan, and is symbolized by the Chinese character signifying 'Three Drops of Water.' There is also a font for cleansing and the purification of candidates. The significance of the remaining pieces will be mentioned in the work of the Society.

Visiting a Lodge

Just inside the Outer door is the 'Hung Kon' or 'Red Staff', which is the instrument of punishment and the weapon of the Inner Guard who is also known by the name of 'Red Staff'. The visitor must come with disheveled hair and bare feet with the collar of his coat turned in. When he has passed his examination at the outer gate, the Inner Guard, gives the visitor a replica of the red staff to carry in his right hand. When he arrives before the master he has to recite an eight line verse. He must then swear that the certificate which he hands to the Master is his own, and the man who vouches for him must announce his names in the presence of all the brethren. The Master next asks the visitor for his capital (the three Hung Cash - coins) these are usually wrapped in red paper (sometimes the capital seems to refer to the certificate). The visitor places it in his outstretched left hand reciting a verse of about four lines all the time watching how the master intends to receive the capital. If the Master stretches out one, three or four fingers the visitor must not release the capital. If the Master extends four fingers and thumb to take the capital, the visitor must release it, without saying anything, but if the Master extends only two fingers the visitor must recite a verse of some four lines. The visiting brother must then immediately protest his ignorance by reciting another verse of some four lines. The visitor may then take his seat in the temple among his brothers being careful to salute the two Generals at the Hung Gate, kneel thrice when he enters the Gate, to kneel four times when he enters the Hall of Fidelity and Loyalty and twice when he reaches the City of Willows. A stranger failing in any of these tests according to the rules, is taken out and executed on the spot.

The Hung Gate is guarded on either side by two Generals. Above this Gate are two flags on which are painted certain Chinese characters, which when taken together mean "The barriers are open, the way is clear". The next step leads to the Hall of Loyalty and Justice, the entrance to which is also guarded by two Generals, whilst above are two flags with the characters "Put away all thoughts of revenge and malice." On each side of the gate the inscriptions read, "Two Dragons disputing over a pearl," and "Overturn Ts'ing and restore Ming."

From the Hall of Loyalty members pass into the city of Willows, which has a Gate for each point of the Compass and each gate is guarded by two Generals with their respective flags. The East Gate of the City (or the central triple Gate) where they come to the Red Flower Pavilion, in front of which stands an Officer whose duty it is to dispense purifying water from the 'Three Rivers' to new members. Above the pavilion is the Grand Altar, with the rostrum of the Master of the lodge. (In most modern lodges the Red Flower Pavilion is represented by a model, placed on the table which serves for the Altar.

Preparation of the Candidate

Sometime before the meeting, summonses to attend are sent out on a strip of red paper with black writing demanding attendance at "The Night of the Market of Universal Peace". Just the time and place, no agenda is stated. The notice must be destroyed as soon as read.

It seems probable that the ritual as we now have it is really the final degree

of a series of which the Traditional History gives an outline. Even as it stands it is quite clear that the candidate does not begin his mystical journey in the Lodge, but merely finishes it there.

In a convenient room near or adjoining the lodge on the night chosen the candidates are purified and have to change into new clothes. Each candidate must be vouched for by an Office bearer, who is responsible for him. The New member must not talk to any of his brethren except the ones responsible for his instruction for at least four years and must not break any of the 36 rules of the Society. He at this time pays an initiation fee. His date, hour

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and place of birth are entered into a registry. Next his queue is unbraided and allowed to hang down his back. The right arm, shoulder and breast are made bare and he is divested of all his belongings, nothing save a new jacket and trousers, the left leg of the latter being rolled up to above the knee. The candidates wear grass sandals; symbolically the winged sandals of Mercury. Following a few preliminary questions and a serious warning as to the nature of the obligation required of them, and the responsibilities they are undertaking by entering the Order, the Master comes out of the Temple clothed in white, hair hanging loose down his back. He proceeds to, at length, recite the traditional history of the foundation of the Hung Society. He also tells them that the full title of the Society is Hung Ka meaning the Family of the Hung. This is followed by giving the candidates a few of the signs. He then returns to the Temple to consecrate it and then opens lodge in due form.

The candidates enter into the lodge under crossed swords. This is called "Crossing the Bridge from the Isles of the Blest to The Market Place of Universal Peace. (This is actually the name used for a meeting of a Lodge). The candidates finished their journey through the Underworld outside the Lodge, on entering the lodge they pass the Isles of the Blest to The City of Willows, representing Heaven.

Consecration and Opening of the Lodge

After leaving the candidates the Master re-enters the Temple (or lodge) with his hair loose down his back (today queues are no longer worn, but the ritual remains unaltered) right shoulder bare, and clad in white robes of the Ming period. He puts a red band or turban around his head. he then purifies himself by washing his hands and face. He then blesses the Warrant Flag, then the Seven Stared Banner of the Victorious Brotherhood, then the following objects, each with an appropriate incantation:(a) the Magic Sword; b) the Pen, Ink Tablet and Inkstone, etc.; and (c) the Magic Mirror. He then lights the red lamp or Hung Lamp while he blesses it. He then carries on with the consecration of the lodge by blessing the Jade (Foot) rule while placing it into position. He then binds a pair of grass sandals on his feet and goes to the Altar near the model of the Red Flower Pavilion. He lights the various lamps on the Altar, then burns a charm to expel all evil spirits from the Lodge. Then very reverently he lights four blades of grass and places them in the precious censer before the tablet of the five ancestors. This done, he then lights fifteen incense sticks, places them between the palms of his outstretched hands, kneels down invoking the Spirit Heroes and opens the lodge with a long prayer. He then pours out tea and wine and consecrates the standards with a prayer, then offers the five cups of wine as a libation, the first cup to the bridge in the East with the brass and iron planks, then a cup to each of the remaining cardinal points, the last cup to the centre where the Master is supported. A white horse and a black ox are now slaughtered. The white horse is sacrificed to the Sun to secure victory, and the black ox is sacrificed to the Gods of the Underworld to facilitate the

journey of the dead i.e. Hung Heroes. The carcasses are then carried out to the kitchen, and while the ceremony is proceeding they are cooked and prepared for the banquet. Outside the door the candidates are waiting, and when all is ready an alarm is given on the door and the ceremony of Initiation commences.

The Initiation

The Red Staff (Inner Guard) sounds the alarm: The Master directs the Commander of the Main Body to investigate. On learning that the Vanguard seeks admission, he is permitted to enter. The Vanguard is then examined. After a lengthy examination, the Vanguard is presented with his warrant, the precious Magic Sword and informed that he may bring into the Lodge his new recruits (candidates) for acceptance if properly prepared; faithful, worthy and brave. The Sword is to behead traitors or cowards, i.e. the candidates that wish to drop out.

On entering the lodge - left foot first, then kneeling on the Magic Sword, with lighted incense sticks pointing down, the candidates then give their names, place of birth, date of birth, time of birth, then they attest that they have freely made the choice and on their own accord of joining the lodge. The candidates then take their oath and promise to obey the 36 laws or articles of the Society, attesting to each individual Law in turn at the same time agreeing to the penalty associated with that law. The Vanguard gives a long Prayer before the oath. After the oath, a white cock is beheaded, and the symbolic meaning explained to the candidates. (The white cock represents 'Tsat, who is a traitor.)

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The working tools are then presented. These are: The Precious Sword; the pair of Scissors; the Brush Pen; The Hung Lamp; the Jade Rule (to test the individuals character and measure time); the Abacus; the Pair of Scales; the Peach Tree; the precious Mirror (in which is reflected the true character of the initiates); the History of the Sacred Censer; and the Pass Word ("Poon") and the accompanying signs. The candidates now pay their initiation fees and receive their certificates of membership.

The Mystical Journey

The candidates now embark upon their mystical journey through the Underworld. The candidates are led all the way through this troubled journey by the Vanguard, who has the necessary pass words, and are informed that they may not make it to the Islands of the BIest (We are reminded here of the initial admonition to the candidate in his impersonation of Hiram Abiff, and his journey, from the temple, being accosted by the ruffians, during the period, of some days, in which he was indecently interred There is every reason to believe that he was journeying through the Underworld, and on his return, was resurrected to a 'living perpendicular'.)

Their journey takes them from the East over the sacred mountains, just before dawn, with certain abilities in the military arts, acquired in the Red Flower Pavilion, under the instruction of the Master of Hung. The Master instructed them in 108 areas, including the three bonds and the five virtues, upon which they were examined. They were also instructed in the five principles, namely, the principle of Heaven, the principle of Earth, the principle of the God(s), the principal of Man and the principal of Oneself (i.e. the spirit, the soul and the mystical self). The Vanguard then recites the various principles.

The number that learnt the military arts at the Shiu laam Monastery each time were three; the sworn brother went before the candidate and the adopted brother followed; the spirit, the body and the soul of the candidate. All candidates left the Monastery, but not all have arrived; some are still far off, others are near at hand while some roam about the world without any fixed residence. This alludes to the separation of men before they enter Heaven. The roads that are travelled always appear to be the middle road. (Compare Rosicrucian and Kabalistic Mysticism in which we hear of the Middle pillar, or Middle Path of Benignity, which lies between the two Pillars of Mercy and Severity, the path or steps between the pillars at the porchway to the Temple. There is also strong reference to the Middle Path of Buddhism.).

The Master then closely questions them as to who they passed on their way to Islands of the Blest. They passed eight priests each carrying some precious thing. Then an old woman, probably the patroness of sailors, carrying her bird the Phoenix. She is a Taoist Deity. The Phoenix is the ancient Egyptian mythological beautiful bird that lives for 600 years, burns itself in a fire, then rises from the ashes to live another 600 years. They then pass the Temple of Hian-chu-lung, daughter of Hai-lung-wang, a mirror image of the Roman God Neptune, God of the Seas, and identified with Poseidon the Greek God of the Sea. The travelers then pass the Black Dragon Mountain, the Mountain of Sunset of the Western world. At the foot of this mountain, the mystical boat was waiting for them to take them over the waters of Death to Paradise (equivalent to the Egyptian boat Ra). To complete this part of the journey, they must be in possession of the pass word 'Poon'. They can only travel on the 24th day of the twelfth month of the year and stop at a small island on the 25th day of the twelfth month. Probably the Island of Tranquillity. (Is this the origin of Christmas, and the Yule time Log?) The journey is completed on the 4th day of the first month at the port of the Market Place of Universal Peace, a journey of ten days.

The crew of the boat is then considered, the Captain in the bow and his wife is in the stern. The Captain was born at midnight while his wife was born at noon. Thus they should never have married, because people born at opposite hours cannot agree to harmonize. Thus it will be seen that they represent Yin and Yang, the black and white pillars of the Rosicrucian symbolism. It should also be noted that Christ was crucified at mid-day, likewise, the Masonic tragedy takes place at high noon. It is clear that mid-night and mid-day have a very special mystical significance. The goddess Kwan Yin accompanies the Hung Heroes from the time they board the mystical boat to their departure from the Underworld, and to intercede on their behalf if required. The vessel is then described, on the bow was an image of the God of Fire. (Fire, being all consuming, creates distress, thus the sign of the God is the sign of Distress. This sign is universal. The three distinct movements are recognized by the Natives of New

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Guinea all the south sea islands, as well as in India, China, the Middle East, Africa and in the Americas among the Aztecs, Incas and Mayas.) The hull, holds, masts, sails and the construction of the boat are described together with any mystical Gods that were shown. In the middle of the ship were the images Prince Kwan, on his left Kwanphing, and on his right General Chau-chang representing, Mars the God of War; Jupiter or Jove, the Supreme Being, and Saturn, the Roman God of Agriculture or the God Cronus of Greek Mythology. In the stern of the ship stood the blessed Queen of Heaven, Kwan Yin, on her right stood General Hiang and on her left General Hoh: Taoist Deities.

The travelers then pass over the sacred bridge spanning the three rivers that flow into the three lakes of Tranquillity, and the five seas of Heaven. It is not certain if this is the two planked bridge of Iron and Brass, i.e. the rainbow Bridge, joining Earthly Paradise with the City of the Gods; or the Celestial Bridge crossing from the Islands of the Blest to Market of Universal Peace. However, they meet three Gods on the bridge. The three holy Buddhas: the past, present, and future Buddhas. For Christians, this is the equivalent of the life; the resurrection, and the second coming of Christ. In fact, a number of the religions of Asia and America have a similar myth. This would seem to confirm that for the 35 years of Christ's life not mentioned in the Bible, he did in fact journey to the Orient, India, Tibet, China and Japan, and perhaps to the Americas, as some of the traditions or local myths seem to indicate.

At the far side of the Bridge was an old man at a stall selling fruit -- peaches of five colours. The name of the old man was Shi Pang-Hang. Peaches are a symbol of Eternal Life, and are from the Tree of Life. The Old Man corresponds to St. Peter, as the Gate Keeper of the Heavenly City. Shi Pang-Hang charges 21 cash, which sum is deducted from the initiation fees. The candidate is presented with a peach at this time, and is then shown the Shades of the Departed Brethren, miniature stone tablets stored in a special sacred vault or Temple. The candidate then goes under the bridge of the three Buddhas. He dared not pass the three Buddhas upon the bridge, the gap between God and man is too great. The candidate then arrives at the Hung Gate. The slow ones cross it in twenty-one steps, whereas the faster ones cross in eight steps. However, if they are shod with the grass sandals (the winged sandals of Mercury) they can cross very quickly in 3, 5 or 7 steps.

The candidates now complete their journey by visiting various parts of the Lodge. They proceed to the Hall of Loyalty and Fidelity where the shrine of Kwan Ti is situated. They then proceed to the circle of Heaven and Earth. Heaven is shown as an inverted bowl over the saucer shaped Earth. The Earth is shown as a depression within a ring of mountains with a raised central city in the middle. The Brotherhood have taken the name of Heaven and Earth, signifying that even in death the brethren are not separated, as shown by Yin and Yang united. Within the Circle is the City of Willows, equivalent to the Holy City of Zion of the West. This idea is also found in the Hindu mythology. The size of the City of Willows is limitless, indicating Universality, the same as the Universality of Masonry. The City of Willows has three main streets, but the middle one is the widest and the most beautiful, and the most travelled. The Vanguard describes the City with its three Pagodas, three ponds and three temples, one dedicated to Kwan Yin, one to Kwan Ti and one to Kao Chii. He also describes the 108 houses, 21 watch towers, 18 furnaces and the Hung Lamp. The candidates then pass a fiery mountain on their way to the Red Flower Pavilion, which is the gathering place of all Hung heroes.

Conclusion of the Ceremony

The candidates are then led around the Lodge and examined by the brethren. The Vanguard answers the question on behalf of the candidates. One of the brethren reads the Rules of the Triad Society. Death being the penalty for any infraction. The Brethren and new Members are then invited to a banquet for which the black ox and white horse were slaughtered earlier in the ceremony. The banquet is symbolic of the opposites, Yin and Yang, black and white, good and evil etc.

The Signs, Words, etc.

.Likewiser, the exoteric political objects of overthrowing The Manchu Dynasty of

Ts'ing and restoring Ming has

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already been mentioned. However, in the Triad Society today Ts'ing and Ming can, and often does, refer to any political Party, governing body or individual outside of China that is an enemy of the local Chinese. It is for this reason that in almost every country of the world, The Triad Society is illegal!

The signs of Fire, Distress, and Earth have already been dealt with. However, concerning Fire or Distress, in ancient Mexico, Quetzalco

The sign of distress as already mentioned is found all over the world, and must consist of three distinct movements. The Chinese also slightly bend their knees when giving this sign, in the form of the Regent of Venus, the goddess of Love, likewise makes this sign. His legend is as follows: He descended from Heaven by means of a ladder of 88 steps (Jacob's Ladder), passed the mountain of fire, crossed the sea on a raft and fought with a giant, who wounded him in the foot near by a fall of water, and sustaining food, but he succeeded in slaying his enemy. Limp and bleeding, he struggled from the East, where he had started, towards the West, where his further progress was barred by the great sea (the Pacific). There he built a great funeral pyre, made the sign of distress, and then immolated himself on a Cross at the top, thus making a sacrifice of himself to the God of Death, who rules the Underworld. After eight days, he eventually arrives in Heaven, where he now rules over the planet Venus i.e. Divine Love. It is interesting to note that the veneration of the Mexicans for the Cross, which so greatly surprised the Spaniards, was associated with this God.

The Chinese do not, as a rule, shake hands. However, quasi-Triad Societies in other parts of the world do, and there is a very close resemblance to some of the Masonic hand shakes.

Of interest is the peculiar way the clothes are worn during parts of the ceremony, one pant leg turned up, and the apposite breast and arm made bare, with the application of a sharp instrument (the magic sword) applied to the naked breast.

The general pass sign is always given in the ceremony, and consists of stretching forth the right hand, often with the five fingers apart, and rotated once, back and forth accompanied with the pass word of POON. This refers to the Five ancestors. (We are reminded here of the sign of St. Lawrence the Martyr in the Allied Masonic Degrees.)

The sign of wood is given by crossing the hands over the lower abdomen. This is another very common sign all over the world; especially in illustrations of death poses, or engraved upon coffin lids. It is also possible that it is connected with another sign, that of crossing the arms over the breasts. This becomes the sign of resignation of death in ancient Egypt, and also of Vishnu, a God of the Hindus, and denotes resignation. Vishnu made this sign when he sacrificed himself for men. This sign is also found in the Byzantine Empire. Daniel in the Lion's also made this sign. The examples are almost endless.

There are numerous hand signs, the most important being the sign of Heaven and Earth. This is given by pointing one hand to the sky and the other to the earth. This is an old Buddhist sign and the Buddha is often depicted making it. It will also be found in Mexico and in ancient Egypt, where we find it made by Osiris and by Horus. In Mediaeval days, it is made by Christ or the Angels, clearly indicating the same line of thought, which also includes the idea of death and the resurrection. In the United Kingdom the idea has not entirely vanished, for

even today there is a curious ceremony which takes place at Melrose Abbey on the Night of Midsummer. Amid the ruins, the members of all the local Masonic Lodges gather and go through the ruins in procession, holding aloft flaming torches. At the end of the journey they halt, turn down their torches and extinguish them on the ground. The origin of the ceremony is unknown; however the esoteric meaning is that it is in honour of the Sun God, which after sunset declines in power, and metaphorically sinks into the grave.

The threefold sign of Heaven, Earth and Man (the Triad sign of membership), is given by the hands, left over the left breast, and right hand extended. For Heaven, the thumb and first two fingers of both hands are extended. For Earth, the thumb and forefinger form a circle the remaining fingers are extended of both hands. And for Man, the

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fist is closed with only the thumb and little finger extended. The last given is also the sign of magic and is a universal potent sign against the evil eye. In England, where it still survives in country districts, it is called 'Making the Horns.' It is said to represent the horns of the crescent moon and is associated with the horse shoe. In Italy, it is regarded as a powerful charm. There are numerous examples around the world of its use and meaning. There are also numerous other signs of lesser importance; i.e. they do not carry the death penalty, nor are they frequently used.

Other Methods of Recognition

There are numerous methods of recognition and message signs. One rather interesting is: 'if in need of money, place hat under the left arm with the interior facing outward.' A reference to the begging bowl of the Buddhist Monks.

On entering the house of a brother, enter left foot first, or take three steps; one short and two long.

To warn a brother that you have a friend with you who is not a member and to put him on his guard: on removing your shoes or sandals at the front door, place them together with the sole of one upwards and the other downwards.

Tests in Handling Articles

There are a vast number of such tests. The bulk of them concern tea cups and tea pots and their arrangement on a tray or table. The Chinese are avid tea drinkers. The tests include: the arrangement of the pots and cups; the pouring of the tea; the order that the cups are filled or partially filled; which cup is served first; and which is drunk first; how it is picked up, etc. All have a specific meaning. In fact, a conversation can almost be had from these tests alone.

The Catch Words and Phrases

All catch words or phrases are taken from the ritual. In addition there are over 100 slang words used by the Triad or Hung Societies that have a special meaning. For example:

"The enemy" means a Magistrate
"A draught of wind" means a spy the police
"There is a wind" means "A stranger is here"
"Grass sandals" means, "A spy of the Hung"
"Night brothers" means. "A messenger of the lodge"
"To bite ginger" means to smoke tobacco

"To bite clouds"

means to smoke opium

The Certificates

No consideration will be given to the various certificates, of the various Lodges or of individuals, since little if any esoteric meaning is attached to them, even though they contain a great deal of information in cryptic form.

The Magic Mirror and the Importance of the Shadow

Throughout the whole of the Hung or Triad Ritual there are clear traces of ancient magical beliefs. This is true if any mention or reference is made to a magic mirror, its reflection, or a shadow cast by such reflection. In any myth, rite, or ritual, if mention is made of the sacred mirror, an ancient magic is being referred to. In all rites or rituals of historical importance, fragments of magic can be detected, but as man grew more sophisticated and real scientific knowledge replaced the half-truths based upon the magic. The tendency is to replace or turn the magic rite or ritual into a symbol of some mystical experience. Thus it may be asked if there is any esoteric meaning or any allusion made to the magic mirror, either directly or indirectly, in Masonry?

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From this magical potency of the mirror, it is just a short step to premise that a man's shadow or reflection is part of his personality, soul, spirit, or inner self; and any curse or damage to any of these Parts of man will affect the man himself. Remember, in the ancient beliefs and myths of all primitive peoples man is a multiple being with several souls, spirits or selves, including his shadow and reflection. The loss of any of these is a serious matter and is usually calculated to cause the death of the owner. Do not say that nobody believes in superstitions, myths, or the supernatural to-day. How many of us here and now would avoid going under a ladder? Or are not concerned about Friday the 13th? Or do not think of the seven years of bad luck meted out on breaking a mirror? Or a streak of good or bad luck at the races, at cards, or in Los Vegas? It becomes almost endless. Somewhere, somehow there is a mystical, symbolic superstitious trait in everybody.

The length of the shadow denotes strength. The shorter or smaller the shadow, the weaker and more susceptible the victim is to harm. Thus, the murder of all gods or heroes in any myth or ritual takes place at High Noon. The victim's shadow is then the shortest! The idea of the shadow or reflection from a mirror or surface of water or any liquid being a physical part of man's self is more than 30,000 years old.

There is another piece of very striking evidence concerning the importance that the shadow contains the vital elements of man. In ancient times, in order to establish the foundations of a building and make them stand firm forever, it was customary to obtain the shadow of a man to guard and provide the necessary strength to the building. To achieve this end a man was slain and his body buried under the foundation stone at dawn when his shadow was longest and he was at his strongest! In Palestine to-day numerous examples of children buried under the foundation stones of buildings can be found. When Jericho was captured, and the walls fell down. Joshua laid the curse in the name of the Lord. (Joshua Ch. 6. v.26.) Later Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt Jericho and paid the price. (1 Kings Ch. 16. v.34.). Now we can see the import of the 'Stone that the builders rejected.'

In the time of Christ numerous references were made that "He was the Foundation Stone of his Church". This was made even more significant in that Christ was

crucified at high noon, when his shadow was shortest and his powers, which were feared, were weakest

Even today in England coins with the head of a man (or king) are placed under foundation stones, masts or in the keel when a ship is built. Just in case! The idea is that the person either dead or when he dies will haunt the building or ship and thus protect it

The significance of the Jade Rule now becomes obvious. It measures the length of the shadow, or the quality of the reflection and thus his character, or the life span of the individual, or controls the time of his actions. Consider the 24-inch gauge. Is it by coincidence that Hiram Abiff was slain at high noon and buried at midnight? Or is it by chance that the newly obligated candidate is placed in the northeast corner of the Lodge; the position of the foundation stone? Symbolically, the newly obligated Mason dies, guards the lodge with his shadow or spirit or the essence of his life for future Prosperity. During his journey through the Underworld, he is given further instruction as a Fellowcraft until he can emulate his mentor and join him by being raised to living perpendicular and given the substitute word. Allegorically, He makes his journey through the underworld under the guidance and tutelage of Hiram Abiff, whom he impersonates. Thus, we can see that the answer to the above Masonic question becomes a fairly sound "yes". However, there is more evidence to be considered.

There is an ancient myth concerning the power of the mirror in its reflection and the associated shadow. A gourd is nearly filled with water and a dagger is laid across the top of the gourd, but does not touch the water in it. Now, if one looks into the gourd, he sees the dagger cutting his own reflection, then later he will die. This is called cutting the shadow'. This is used in the Triad Society for all candidates, only instead of dying, the candidate becomes the hostage of the Master of the Lodge. The Master in his turn preserves the most priceless asset of the Society; the Lodge. In some cases to ward off Sorcerers, the point of the knife is placed into the water and the point is stuck into the bottom of the vessel or bowl. Then the knife is actually stabbing the reflection. Death of the victim is now much quicker.

The Greeks were very sensitive to the power of the mirror: Consider Narcissus. He did not die for love of his own reflection. That was a much later explanation, to make it more palatable for the current aesthetic and religious sense of Greek society at the time of Homer and Virgil. The original explanation was that his reflection was stolen by the Water Spirit, and thus he died. This earlier 'myth' was unacceptable to the ancients because it was sacrilegious. The Water Spirit watered the crops and permitted the growth that was benign to mankind. Another well known story is of Perseus and Medusa, where the reflection of Medusa on the shield of Perseus was used to cut off her head.

The Journey of the Soul

The meaning of the ceremony of initiation into the Hung Society.

12.

The framework of the ceremony deals with what is supposed to befall a man after death. Many of the same details are found in other rites in the form of legends or myths as far apart as the Australian Aborigines and the Mediaeval Christians. It is amazing how again and again the mysterious bridge is mentioned. In fact, there are two bridges. These bridges are met with among the Hindus and Parsis, among the Norse in Lucien's journey in the Solar Barque, the story of St. Patrick's Purgatory, etc. The question is: "What do the bridges, or in fact, any of the mystic articles represent?"

Further, it has been seen that the bridges, swords, and magic mirrors etc. and various incidents that have taken place in the Hung Hero's journey through the Underworld are not unique. Even the Underworld has been repeated in the myths and legends of all the world's old societies, from the Australian Aborigines, the American Indians, Chinese, European to Modern Societies, although, it is suspected that some of the modern religious or semi-religious organizations would like to distance themselves from each other, and claim that theirs is the only true original rite.

The question becomes: "How did the allegories, myths legends and esoteric meanings evolve? Who first thought about the Hereafter or the immortality of man?" It is the Immortality of Man that is perhaps the one thing more than any other that is universal. Yet why are all the stories the same? Did somebody or some people cross the 'Threshold' and upon returning describe the 'Beyond'? Perhaps many have crossed the threshold at different times and all returned with the same story, and thus provide the common thread.

It could be a combination of the two explanations. A number of individual travelers (perhaps on a plant induced drug trip, or involved in an accident, or serious wounds sustained in battle) crossed the Threshold in Mu many thousands of years ago. Then these travelers, returning now as religious priests, passed their experiences on in mystic or symbolic form to succeeding generations as a religious rite or ritual. They then migrated around the world. In the succeeding generations there may have been others that crossed the Threshold and on returning confirmed and gave added vibrant life to the old legends, and so the myths continued without any material changes! It would seem, therefore, that we are not dealing with complete fiction, but with a major element of fact described by different authors, as we have in the New Testament to-day. It now seems more than probable that the first crossing of the threshold took place in Mu, at least 30,000 years ago. The routes of the various migrations are shown by J Churchwood in his book The Children of Mu.

APPENDICES

1 Definitions:

ESOTERIC:- The inner or hidden meaning understood by or meant for only the select few who have a special knowledge or interest

EXOTERIC:- Suitable for or communicated to the general public. i.e. not belonging or pertaining to the inner or select few

ALLEGORIC:-The symbolic representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning through stone or other material forms

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III. Addendum

If now the thrust of the enquiry considers the esoteric and allegoric ceremonies or rituals of the various societies throughout the world, then perhaps a parallel and or a stronger case can be made that their common origins were in fact in Mu. To this end, look at the effect the myths and legends of various nationalities has had on their religious beliefs. (Christianity has several - consider the Yuletide Log, etc.) The inquiry must include the reverse: That is, the effect of religious beliefs upon the myths etc. To these ends future papers might include one or more of the following:

- 1) The stories of Ulysses and Aeneas
- 2) Vergil's concept of the underworld
- 3) The Egyptian's 'Book of the Dead'
- 4) The journey of the Egyptian Boat Ra
- 5) Dante's Inferno
- 6) Other legends of the journey through the Underworld
- 7) The Grail legends and the journey through the Underworld
- 8) Sir Lancelot's, Sir Percival's, and Sir Galahad's and the 'Mystic Barque',
- 9) Milton's Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained
- 10) Jonah and the whale,
- 11) Jacob's Ladder and the Tower of Babel,
- 12) The Magic Mirror,
- 13) The Jade rule and the 24 inch gauge,
- 14) The Crucifixion,
- 15) The Resurrection,
- 16) The levels of life or existence in the Underworld, Purgatory, Earth, Paradise, and Heaven and the location of these areas or states. Their location may vary but their substance remains. Is this the substance that has been brought back by those that have crossed the Threshold and returned?
- 17) Another paper could consider the references to the Mystical numbers of 3, 5, 7, 13, 21, 72, & 108.
- 18) Then there is the short treatise of 'Who was Hiram Abiff that also states why and by whom he was murdered.' Then we must consider his journey through the underworld.

All the above topics have the same framework as in the Hung ritual. The mystical interpretation in the Eastern and Western world and the Hung Society of the Soul after Death turns out to be very similar.

The proceeding is a very small area of the esoteric and allegoric meanings behind the Hung Society, which is in itself perhaps a worth while society (it is assumed that the Triad and Hung societies are not the same. There are some, however, who stoutly maintain that they are one and the same. It should be pointed out however, that when the heat is turned up, it is very convenient to seek refuge in another name; thus a certain amount of confusion might prevail) The concordant bodies are another matter and range from the purely monastic religious societies to the Mafia like Triad Society. Thus the judgement of the White Lily, Lotus, White Flag, Incense Burners etc. must be reserved until more is known. The Triad Society is illegal around the world. It is thus rather like the Mafia in that it is not too gentle with society. To a very minor degree, Masonry, in the past has not been above reproach. Reference is made to their participation with the Jacobites and Bonnie Prince Charles in 1745 in their attempt to restore the Stewarts to the Throne of England. Or, their actions in the American War of Independence, when both sides discussed battle plans in open Lodge. Or, their involvement with Brother Morgan are cases in point The militant framework of the Hung concordant bodies should also be compared with Masonic concordant bodies. In all of this there is one Supreme Fact distinguishing the Masons loom all the others is that the Masons have carved in stone their antithesis to things politic and things religious while still believing in both. The concordant bodies of the Hung Society will always point out the consequences of such association. The. esoteric, mystical or allegoric significance of the various topics that span a number of societies some of which are clandestine should not mean that we condemn the mystic or allegoric topic as such, for it is important to realize that it is not the allegoric or mystical meanings that are clandestine, but certain topics aims or items of a current political, economic, or of an administrative nature that render them clandestine.

A number of questions naturally come forward. For instance: "What are the Secrets and Mysteries of Masonry?" "Are they so Secret?" "Perhaps the Usages and Customs of Freemasons are far older than those of die Ancient Egyptians to which there is a near affinity. These are not trivial questions but go to the root of the Masonic existence. A root, incidentally, that should make all Masons justly proud. It has been suggested that although Masonry may have been formalized in 1712; its real origins, like the Hung Society, are in Mu of some 30,000 years ago. This origin further indicates how sensible our ancient brethren were to the ancient mysticisms. This is a very fertile area for more research.
